

Restoration Cathedral Music

Oral Introductions at Concert

Welcome to our recital of Restoration cathedral music, part of the day-long symposium being held here on campus and also the associated L.I.F.E. class. The idea for the symposium was prompted by the receipt by WIU of a very important and valuable manuscript of music from the late seventeenth century. The choir is about to present a program of church music from this period by several of its leading composers. This is music composed primarily for the Chapel Royal – the monarch’s private chapel – by leading musicians of the day employed as singers and composers for that institution. Some of this music gradually filtered out in copies to other cathedrals around the kingdom – which is why we have called the symposium Restoration Cathedral Music, not Chapel Royal music. All of these composers are inter-connected in some way. Most of them started out as boy choristers and grew up together to become professional colleagues, performing each others’ music on a regular basis. The music y

Poor Jeremiah! He died just 5 years later around the age of 33 of a self-inflicted wound; a suicide the result of unrequited love. A contemporary said of him: "his mind was naturally of a melancholy cast."

What can be said about Henry Aldrich? He was one of the most remarkably brilliant and versatile men of his age. Born in London, he attended Oxford University and after graduating stayed on to become Dean of his college, Christ Church, in 1689, and serving as Vice Chancellor of the University from 1692-

Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis in F – attrib. Aldrich (?Turner)

Having cast some doubt on Aldrich's authorship of the two preceding pieces, we wished to give him credit as an accomplished composer. The following anthem, *Out of the Deep*, is definitely his work and considered one of his best compositions. Choir members have really enjoyed learning and rehearsing this piece. We are using the transcription prepared by Robert Shay, one of the presenters at our symposium.

Out of the Deep – Henry Aldrich

There are two names associated with our manuscript: Henry Aldrich and William Turner. The title page acknowledges that the handwriting of the entire manuscript is in the same hand, that of William Turner, and we were able to verify that this is indeed his writing by comparing it to known samples of his work at Oxford. In fact, the two anthems, which we will hear shortly, bear his signature, so we have always assumed that these are his compositions. *Try me O God* is the only composition known elsewhere, there being a set of parts for it at York Minster. Thus, as we have pursued our research into the manuscript over the months, the focus of attention has shifted from Aldrich to Turner.

As I said earlier, Anglican service music consisted of settings of certain and anthems. It was quite common for composers to write settings of the canticles together with an accompanying anthem. One of the topics we'll be discussing at our next symposium session is that if we accept the possibility that the service music is wrongly attributed to Aldrich, and Turner composed the whole thing, then it is quite likely that *Behold Now Praise the Lord* is the companion anthem to the service in F.

Behold Now Praise the Lord – William Turner

William Turner was conscripted to the Chapel Royal from Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford, where he had begun his career as a chorister under Edward Lowe (with whom Aldrich is also believed to have studied). Shortly after his voice broke he became master of the choristers at Lincoln Cathedral at the age of about 16 in 1667. He was recalled to become a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal two years later. Subsequently, whilst remaining a Gentleman, he became a vicar choral at the newly built St Paul's Cathedral in 1683; he was made Doctor of Music by Cambridge University in 1696 – the citation says: "Purcell alone being more learned." He joined the choir of Westminster Abbey as lay clerk in 1699. Thus he had the distinction of singing in all three of the major London religious musical institutions simultaneously.

So far all the anthems we have heard have been what is known as "Full Anthems," meaning that the choir sings all the way through. Another type known as "Verse Anthems" was also very popular at this time. These could include extended passages of instrumental music, and sections (verses) for solo or combinations of solo voices, as well as short passages for choir. *Try Me O God* is of a kind of hybrid. It doesn't include instrumental passages but it does contain solo vocal passages which contrast with the full choir. It concludes with a rousing fugal Alleluia first sung by the soloists and then the full choir.

Try Me O God – William Turner